

BL

1265

.R3D7

FT MEADE
GenColl





A LEARNED INDIAN
IN SEARCH OF RELIGION:
A Discourse,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

OF THE

RAJAH, RAM MOHUN ROY:

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STRAND-STREET, DUBLIN,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27th, 1833,

BY

WILLIAM HAMILTON DRUMMOND, D.D.

And published at the request of many of his auditors.

“They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” LUKE xiii. 29.

HUNTER, LONDON;
SHAW, DUBLIN; KING, CORK; ARCHER, BELFAST.

MDCCCXXXIII.

BL 1265
R3D7

A DISCOURSE,

&c.

PSALM LXXXVI. 8, 9, 10.

“ Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord ! Neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord ; and shall glorify thy name—for thou art great, and doest wondrous things : thou art God alone.”

YES—JEHOVAH is God alone, and all attempts to raise up any god beside God the Father, are as impotent as would be the attempt to sap the foundations of the earth, or pluck the sun from his orbit. His works, through all their boundless variety and amplitude, declare him, by the unity of their design, to be ONE. The voice of Revelation, through all the rich diversity of her communications, declares him to be ONE. The great legislator of the Jews, their kings, their prophets, the inspired apostles ; the blessed Saviour himself, he who was filled with the Spirit of the Most High—all declare him to be ONE.—This is the conclusion at which the wisest and best of men, in all ages and countries, who have faithfully followed the twin lights of nature and revelation, have arrived. The light of nature and the light of revelation, flow in parallel lines from the same great fountain of everlasting truth. The latter shines with a brighter and more intense ray than the former—but they never cross each others path, nor stream in opposite directions ; nay, they may be said to blend and mingle together, as the rays of heat, and of colour, in the solar beam, to produce one white and brilliant illumination. The God of nature is the God of revelation ; and it is impossible, that by the voice of the one, he can contradict what he has uttered by the voice of the other. What nature has spoken, revelation has repeated in more audible sounds. The aspirations of nature in the soul of man, after a holier, happier state of being, are re-echoed by revelation ; and nature’s “ longings after immortality,” are cherished and exalted into a lively faith in the resurrection from the dead, by that “ gospel, which hath brought life and immortality to light.”

Though few things, in the usual course of events, are more hopeless than conversion to belief in one God, of the man who has been taught to believe in many ; though the religious principles first implanted in the mind, especially those which are irrational and mysterious, are too tenacious of their hold, to be easily eradicated—yet instances are not wanting of men of superior minds, who have boldly laid the axe to the root of their early prejudices, extirpated them with an unsparing hand, and planted in their place the scions of knowledge

and truth. Some who have been brought up in a belief of the monstrous fictions of heathen mythology, have been led by the strength of their own mental powers, properly exercised, to embrace a belief in one God, the Father and Creator of all.

Suppose a heathen of good natural understanding, which has been improved by culture, an honest inquirer, well versed in the science and literature of his country, painfully sensible of the falsehood and demoralizing tendency of its popular creed, yet aware of the importance of some system of faith and worship, to human virtue and happiness, were to commence his search of a religion, to which he could trust as to an unerring guide, where, let us ask, should he begin, and where terminate his pursuit? By religion, let us suppose him to understand, not an engine of the state, not an idol of priestcraft, not an assemblage of abstruse and mystical notions, a thing of scenic exhibition and ceremony, of genuflexions, apostrophes and unmeaning sounds—but that sublime science which imparts a knowledge of God and his attributes, of man and his duty, his happiness, his chief good, and the means of promoting his best interests in time and in eternity. Suppose our enquirer were assured that he should find the object of his search in the books of the Old and New Testament, but that as there are many forms of religion, all pretending to be taken from those sacred books, he should exercise his own understanding, and judge for himself, being influenced solely by a desire of ascertaining clearly what they reveal. We shall also suppose that previous to his entrance on this task, he has duly considered what is meant by revelation—that he understands by it a special communication of God, in all respects worthy of an infinitely wise, and good being—that its object is to inform mankind of some momentous truths, which are not clearly discoverable by the light of nature—that it should be conveyed in perspicuous language, and not in such obscure terms, as to require another revelation to explain them, for in this case it would be useless, and a third revelation might become necessary for the interpretation of the second. And since language, in the lapse of time, becomes partly obsolete, since words lose their primitive meaning, and acquire a new one, and since a revelation intended for universal adoption, must suffer some changes by translation from one language to another, he will see the necessity of judging of revelation, not so much by particular words, phrases, or detached sentences, as by the general tenor and spirit of the whole. He will consider the style of oriental composition, its magniloquence, its hyperboles, its poetry—with the history, manners, customs, laws, institutions, the peculiar modes of thought and expression of the people to whom the communication was addressed. Hence he will be guarded against the danger of giving a literal meaning to figures of speech, or of supposing that doctrines of vital importance will depend on the interpretation of an ambiguous text, much less on a particular idiom, or the presence or absence of some monosyllabic particle, while long chapters are devoted to subjects of comparatively small interest. Revelation being intended as a guide to the right knowledge of what we ought both to believe and practice—for the poor, and the ignorant, as well as for the rich and the

learned ; he should not imagine that it would require the aid of metaphysics, or the erudition of the schools, to render its saving truths intelligible even to the humblest capacity ; not that it should shrink from minute analysis, or refuse to be tried by the most searching rules of criticism, for those truths which rise prominent to the view, and first arrest attention, are rooted in its profoundest depths ; while they attract the broad gaze of the clown, they challenge the microscopic examination of the philosopher. We shall farther suppose our inquirer to come to the study of his Bible, in happy ignorance of the various subjects of controversy, which have so often agitated the Christian world, or, at least, without having any bias to the tenets of one sect, rather than of another—and that without any aid or embarrassment from creeds, articles of faith, tradition, comments, glosses, expositions, he was to form his own code of religious doctrine, what, according to our knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and the best judgment we are capable of forming, would be the leading principles of that code ?

With respect to the being and perfections of God, the first object of inquiry in the study of religion, he would learn from the Sacred Scriptures, that there is one self-existent, supreme, eternal, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent Being, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. But of the physical or metaphysical nature of God, of his substance or essence, he could learn nothing, for Scripture reveals nothing, except what may be contained in the expression of our Saviour, “ God is a Spirit,” a spirit, i. e. one spirit, observe, by which we understand that God is a simple intelligence—meaning by simple the opposite of complex, uncompounded, or not composed of parts, more than he is influenced by passions, or corporeal affections.

Our inquirer, having been a Polytheist, or a believer in many gods, would be particularly struck by the frequency and earnestness with which Scripture asserts the unity of Jehovah, by its denouncement of polytheism—by its utter contempt—its stern abhorrent rejection of all the gods or idols of the heathen—and by its repeated assertions that Jehovah endures no rival ; that he has no equal—no partner—that beside him there is no god—that he is God alone—that he reigns absolute, independent—that all other intelligences, from the lowest to the highest, from men to angels, cherubim and seraphim, are the creatures of his hands—that he bade them be and they were—that he formed them by his breath—that he upholds them by his mercy—that he regulates and directs the whole operations of nature, by his sovereign uncontrollable fiat—that he “ forms the light and creates the darkness ; that he makes peace and creates evil : I, saith Jehovah, do all these things.” Of the moral nature of God, a subject still more important than his physical nature, and because more important, our inquirer would learn much that would gratify his own moral sense, and fill his heart with love and veneration. He would learn from the inspired word, that God is the Father of the Universe, that he delights in the paternal character, and rules his intelligent creatures, all of whom are equally his offspring ; as a wise, just, impartial and beneficent father—that he “ is good to all, and that

his tender mercies are over all his works,"—that God is love—slow to anger, compassionate, abounding in goodness, and causing all things, even sufferings and afflictions, to co-operate for the permanent good of those who endure them with patient and pious resignation. He would find that God is represented in his word, as providing not only for the animal wants of his creatures, "sending them rain from heaven, with fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness,"—but for their moral, intellectual, and spiritual wants—conducting the operations of his providence, in reference to those wants, by the ministry of intelligent agents—that he "spake unto the fathers by the Prophets in time past,—and in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son."

In the New Testament he would find a revelation of the divine will communicated to mankind by one bearing the high title of the well-beloved Son of God—one superior to all the preceding prophets and messengers of the Most High—invested with greater power, adorned with greater virtue, accomplishing a more arduous task, promoting more extensive good. He would find the special objects of the Saviour's mission to be these, to inculcate the belief, the worship, and the love of one God, the Father;—to confirm the moral law—to give it greater extent, to lend it new sanctions and arm it with more powerful authority,—to preach forgiveness on condition of repentance—to convince man of his accountability—to reveal a future state in which God will judge all men according to their deeds, and proving its reality by his own resuscitation from the dead. He would find the Apostles, the first Christian Missionaries, insisting on the same topics, executing the commands of their divine master, proving that he is "THE CHRIST," preaching on "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," and inviting all, both Heathen and Jew, bond and free, to receive the offered grace and live. Thus would he find that of which he was in search—a religion addressed to the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual nature of man—a religion adequate to his wants, his hopes, his wishes—in all respects worthy of the Father of mercies to reveal—accordant to the religion of nature, though still superior to its purest and most sublime dictates—a religion based not on conjecture or opinion, on dark reasonings, or metaphysical subtleties, on the arbitrary decrees of ecclesiastical councils, or the imperial mandate of a purple tyrant, but on the fixed and immovable foundation of *facts*—facts proved and authenticated by a host of witnesses of unimpeachable veracity. He would not indeed, find a systematic body of divinity, nor regularly digested code of Ethics, deduced from reasoning on the constitution of man, such as may be found in schools of philosophy; but a series of miscellaneous instructions, bearing on them the seal and superscription of heaven, addressed to the mind and heart, appealing to the parental, the filial, the conjugal, the brotherly affections, and so admirably calculated to promote the great objects for which the Saviour lived, and taught, and suffered, and died, and rose again—the moral improvement, the spiritual life, the everlasting salvation of man, as to leave no room for doubt in minds properly susceptible of moral and religious impressions, that all came from God.

Nothing, I should think, would strike the mind of a candid inquirer who had a just perception of the beauty of virtue, more forcibly than the morality of the Gospel. When he compared it with that of any human system, of Mohammed, of Confucius, of the Indian Brahmins, of Socrates, who was pronounced by the oracle to be the wisest of men ; he would see and acknowledge it to be infinitely superior in purity, in extent, in motives, in sanctions ; so adapted to exalt, to dignify, to adorn the nature of man—to advance the great ends of his existence—to conduct him still forward and forward in the way leading to perfection, that he must at last conclude with Locke, that “it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter?” He would be particularly struck with that great rule so much admired, so much neglected, of which the Saviour declares that it is the Law and the Prophets—a rule so simple, so comprehensive, so universally applicable to the whole conduct of social life. Much would he rejoice in a religion which speaks of “glory to God in the highest ; on the earth, peace ; good will to men”—which enjoins us to make God our great example in the practice of mercy and forgiveness—in doing good even to the unthankful—not to be overcome of evil, nor swayed from our benevolence even by the ingratitude and wickedness of its objects—which breathes philanthropy throughout, and exalts charity as the greatest and best of the Christian graces. Much too would he admire those sentiments of self-respect which the gospel enjoins us to cherish—to be pure in heart—and to consider our bodies as the temple of God, into which nothing unholy should find admission. Delighted would he be to contemplate the moral glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus—to see those virtues which were enjoined by the heaven-commissioned teacher, investing him, as with a robe of light, forming the essentials of his character—speaking in his words, working in his actions. In him he would contemplate a bright and beautiful personification of philanthropy, of purity, of truth, the living reality of the just man imagined and depicted by Plato,* a model of moral perfection, of which the world exhibits no second example,—just without the reputation of justice—righteous and holy, though called a friend of publicans and sinners,—bearing the most relentless persecution with a benevolence never to be overcome, in pursuance of his great scheme for man’s moral and spiritual redemption, and at last sealing his testimony to the truth by his blood. And if our inquirer followed the Saviour to the cross, and to the tomb, with emotions of sympathy and veneration, with what delight and amazement would he hail his resurrection and ascension—and in them, with joy behold the type and the pledge of his own ? Hence new motives and incentives to pursue the Christian life with constancy and perseverance—and to love and honour Jesus as the author and finisher of a more pure, holy and sublime faith than is to be found in any other religion which the world has ever witnessed.

* De repub. lib. 2.

Such is a rapid sketch, a hasty outline—easy however to be completed and filled up—of the doctrines which an honest inquirer would discover by his own perusal of the Scriptures; and if he believed all this, and endeavoured to form his life by the precepts and example of our Lord, ought we to deem his creed deficient, or should we deny to him the title of Christian, though he failed to discover the peculiar doctrines by which some Churches choose to be distinguished? Assuredly there are many tenets deemed of primary importance by some denominations of Christians, which by the utmost diligence of research, he could not find. All Protestants will agree that he would explore the Scriptures in vain for the charter conferring infallibility, or the right of supremacy on the visible head of any particular Church. They would all concur in declaring, that it is equally vain to seek in them for the doctrine of Transubstantiation—prayer to the Virgin Mary, Penance, Auricular Confession, Extreme Unction, and masses for the souls of the departed. But what if he should be unable to discover some of their own favourite articles? What if not one of those popish doctrines, appears to him a tittle more irrational and unscriptural than those of Original Sin, Infinite Satisfaction, Vicarious Punishment, Vicarious Righteousness, Election and Reprobation, and the Three in One? To many who are as sound believers in Christianity, and as much under its sacred influences, as the most orthodox man upon earth, none of those doctrines seems to have any legitimate claim to belief, resting as they do on tradition, or the flimsy authority of mystified and mystifying ecclesiastics, but destitute of any solid foundation in the records of evangelic truth.

The case, I can well imagine, would be altogether different with a man who should come to the perusal of the sacred volume with a previously adopted creed, and with all the influence of first impressions continually interfering, and counteracting the plain and obvious meaning of Scripture. Such a man engages in the study not for information, but proof; not to discover what is actually taught, but what support he can find for his peculiar notions. He will mould the Scriptures to his creed, and not his creed to the Scriptures. Hence so many shocking perversions of their meaning, so much twisting and screwing to adjust them to particular formulas; their beauty marred, their wisdom turned to folly, their power over the heart and affections abused to serve the interests of a blind superstition.

Though he cannot readily find that which he seeks, yet giving implicit credence to the assertion, that such and such doctrines may be *collected* from holy writ, he becomes a *collector*; delights in that “index learning, which turns no student pale;” sweeps through the leaves of his Concordance; gathers texts upon texts from every book in the Bible, which have the least reference to the subject, and which, though they have no manner of connexion, nor even a similar sense, yet having a similar sound, answer his object equally well. In proportion to his imagined success in this task, or his real want of it, he will laud his skill, or tax his stupidity; the latter seldom happens, for nothing is more easy, if the mind be properly predisposed, than to find a whole system of divinity in half a dozen texts. He soon falls into the belief, that in certain

expressions more is meant than meets the ear—that learned theologians understand and can explain them best—that there are mystical and cabalistic meanings, known only to adepts, and therefore he must become an adept. Shall he trust to his own judgment? Shall he dare to differ from great and learned authorities? To his plain sense the Scriptures may say one thing, but the adepts, who can extract the pure theological gold from baser matter, say another. They possess the infallible touchstone, by which they can distinguish the genuine ore from the counterfeit, and shall he question the rectitude of their decision?—What! oppose his modern home-spun sense, to their ancient and refined traditional lore! Thus he reasons, and thus instead of exercising his own powers of thought, and following the Scripture precepts to “prove all things” and “in understanding to be a man,” he proves nothing, but surrenders his free-born mind to be harnessed and yoked, to be whipped and spurred. If he has already been taught to believe in the “real presence,” he will remain quite satisfied that this is the doctrine taught in the words “this is my body.” And if he has already acquiesced in the assertion, that *three may be one, and one three*, what proof that the Son is the Father, should he demand beyond the declaration, “I and my Father are one?” In defiance of all reason and sense, and the demonstrative evidence of parallel texts, that unity of purpose, and not unity of essence, can be meant, he adheres, with desperate fidelity, to the orthodox interpretation, and yet if he had not before heard of that doctrine, most assuredly he could never have found it in the Bible.

We shall be told by some of the advocates of human formulas of faith, that the doctrines contained in them, though not directly taught in any chapter, or paragraph of the sacred text, may be inferred from a number of texts properly *strung together*!—Yes—this is exactly the mode in which so many foolish and extravagant notions have been deduced from holy writ. But *inferences* are not revelations—and it amazes me to think, how any man assuming to be an honest teacher of Christianity, and an expounder of the gospel, would so dishonour his own judgment, and tamper with his conscience, as to take *inferences* in place of positive announcements. Can any man be fully persuaded in his own mind, that he is justifiable in supposing that a question of such magnitude, as whether there be only one God, or three, is left to depend on an *inference*? Were the Trinity a doctrine of revelation, revelation would teach it—yes, would teach it to the poor, to children, to babes—and not leave it to be discovered by an intricate process of investigation, which, after all, could never lead to conviction, many of the best reasoners who ever formed a syllagism.

On the other hand, there are numerous instances of persons coming to the study of the Bible with all their early prepossessions matured in favour of a creed called orthodox, who, notwithstanding, have been obliged to abandon it, as not only untenable by the Scriptures, but in direct contradiction to their plainest statements. They have been forced, by the irresistible power of truth, to give up, one after another, every text which they thought favourable to their cause, till not an iota was left for its support, and the whole system has crumbled into

fragments, like the enchanted castle of some wicked wizard of romance, at the sound of a true knight's horn, and vanished away, leaving "not a wreck behind."

The simple and sublime doctrine of the Unitarian Christian, "To us there is one God, the Father," is not an inference, but a positive declaration of Holy writ. The passages by which it is corroborated are so numerous, so explicit, and so strong, that is impossible to controvert or explain them away, by all the sophistry and chicanery of theological schools; though it must be admitted that many churches by maintaining what they term a *Trinity in Unity* and *Unity in Trinity* destroy the beauty, the simplicity, and the power of the Christian doctrine, contradict the Scriptures in which they find no similar expressions, nor similar ideas—raise fatal obstacles to the progress of Christianity, and in the opinion of the most intelligent Heathens, Jews, and Christians, bring on themselves the imputation of polytheism and idolatry.

The justice of the preceding reflections, occasioned by the death of the Rajah, Ram Mohun Roy, is proved and illustrated by his history—to a review of which, in connexion with some of his opinions on one of the most interesting questions which has ever engrossed the thoughts of the learned, let me now solicit attention. This is a subject which has occupied, and is now occupying, the minds of many of our brethren in England and Scotland. The Rajah was a Christian of such intrinsic worth, he was so distinguished by his talents, his learning, his virtues—by the unprecedented example of an Indian Brahmin becoming a genuine Christian,—that he was an object of universal interest; and we need not wonder at the panegyrics heaped on his name, or the profound regret which has attended his departure. I lament that it is not in my power to speak from personal knowledge of this great and good man—but I have heard much of him from friends who frequently enjoyed his society and conversation both in Calcutta and London; and their report has been uniformly such as to amply justify all that warmth of eulogy which has been pronounced on him by the public Press. The preface to his works republished in London 1824, from the Calcutta edition, contains much interesting matter concerning him. It was composed by Dr. Thomas Rees, Secretary to the British and Foreign Unitarian Society, and as the work has become scarce, being now out of print, and known to only a small number of those whom I address, I shall give copious extracts from it, accompanied with a few of the reflections which the subject may suggest.

"Ram Mohun Roy was born about the year 1780, at Bordouan, in the province of Bengal. The first elements of his education he received under his paternal roof, where he also acquired a knowledge of the Persian language. He was afterwards sent to Patna, to learn Arabic; and here, through the medium of Arabic translations of Aristotle and Euclid, he studied Logic and Mathematics. When he had completed these studies, he went to Calcutta, to learn Sanscrit, the sacred language of the Hindoo Scriptures; the knowledge of which was indispensable to his caste and profession as a Brahmin." "It was about the year 1804 or 1805, he became possessed by the death of his father, and of an elder and younger brother, of the whole family property, which is understood to have been very considerable. He now quitted Bordouan, and fixed his residence at Mourshedabad, where his an-

cestors had chiefly lived. Shortly after his settlement at this place, he commenced his literary career, by the publication of a work in the Persian language with a preface in Arabic, which he entitled, 'Against the Idolatry of all Religions.' The freedom with which he animadverted on their respective systems, gave great umbrage both to the Mahommedans and Hindoos, and created him so many enemies, that he found it necessary to remove to Calcutta, where he again took up his residence in the year 1814.

"Two years previously to this period he had begun to study the English language, but he did not then apply to it with much ardour or success. Being some years subsequently appointed Dewan, or chief native officer in the collection of the revenues, and the duties of his office affording him frequent opportunities of mixing with English Society, he applied to it with increased attention, and very soon qualified himself to speak and write it with considerable facility, correctness and elegance. He afterwards studied the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew Languages; of his proficiency in the two last he has given very decisive evidence in the tracts which are here published."

Here let me observe, his early studies were an admirable preparative for the part, he was afterwards to take in religious controversy. His logic and mathematics taught him to reason well, to draw right conclusions from their premises, and detect the sophistry of his opponents; while by his knowledge both of ancient and modern languages, he was eminently qualified to discharge the office of a Biblical critic; and when he entered the polemic arena, to manifest a decided superiority, not only in the part which he espoused in the grand question, but in the minutiae of verbal criticism.

"From his first work 'Against the Idolatry of all Religions,' it is evident that he had been led at an early period of life to regard with disapprobation the monstrous and debasing system of idolatry which was embraced by his countrymen. * * Hence he became anxious to reform their creed and their practice, and determined to devote his talents and his fortune to this important and honourable undertaking." "My constant reflections," he writes in the preface to one of his works, "on the inconvenient or rather injurious rites introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindoo idolatry, which more than any other Pagan worship destroys the texture of society; together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort to awaken them from their dream of error; and by making them acquainted with the Scriptures, enable them to contemplate with true devotion, the unity and omnipresence of nature's God. By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmin, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantage depends upon the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear, trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate whatever man may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation: my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly."

That these sentiments, and many others of a similar kind which it would be tedious to quote on the present occasion, are worthy of a mind imbued with the spirit of Christianity, bigotry itself must be constrained to admit. Fearless of consequences and listening only to the call of duty, he bore his testimony to a momentous truth—and suffered the alienation of friends and the persecution of enemies, with the piety of a saint, and the courage of a martyr.

"The liberal views, and the devout and amiable spirit which are displayed in these extracts, and are indeed discernible in the whole of the author's writings;

may be well thought to have disposed him to a candid examination of the Christian Revelation. From the perusal of the New Testament in his 'long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth' he found, he asserts 'the doctrines of Christianity more conducive to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which had come to his knowledge.' The doctrine of the Trinity, however, which appeared to his mind quite as objectionable as the Polytheism of the Hindoos, presented an insuperable obstacle to his conversion to Christianity, as he found it professed by those with whom he conversed. But as the system so fully approved itself in other respects, to his reason and his piety, his candour would not, on account of this single difficulty, allow him at once to reject it as false. As the most likely method of acquiring a correct knowledge of its doctrines, he determined upon a careful perusal of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in their original languages. From this undertaking he arose with a firm persuasion, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not inculcated in them, and that the Christian Religion was true and divine."

Great and important conclusion! the doctrine of the Trinity is not inculcated in them—and yet the Christian Religion is true and divine! That the learned Brahmin should come to this conclusion, excites as little surprise as to be told that he preferred the monotheism of Mohammed to the tritheism of the Hindoos. "He had early observed the diversities of opinion, existing among the idolators; and that while some exalted Bramah, the Creator; others gave the ascendancy to Vishnu, the Preserver; and others again to Siva, the Destroyer." When he came to examine the creeds of Christians, he must have been struck by a similar diversity of character in the *persons* of their Trinity, and by the different degrees of respect or fear in which each is held by different denominations. The first *person* is, to many, an object of awful apprehension; the second of supreme love and veneration; while the third is overlooked or disregarded, except when occasionally required to complete the triad. If in the second *person* he should trace any similitude to Vishnu, the Preserver, he would see the counterpart of Siva, the Destroyer, in the first, especially as he is depicted in certain books of Calvinistic Divinity, and in the well known popular hymn of Watts which describes him as seated on a "burning throne," besprinkled with blood.

"Having now become upon deliberate and rational conviction a Christian, he hastened to communicate to his countrymen such a view of the religion of the New Testament as he thought best adapted to impress them with a feeling of its excellence, and to imbue them with its pure and amiable spirit. For this purpose he compiled the work entitled, 'The precepts of Jesus the guide to peace and happiness.' To this work, which consists entirely of extracts from the moral discourses of our Lord, he prefixed an 'Introduction,' in which he stated his reasons for omitting the doctrines and the historical and miraculous relations which accompany them in the writings of the Evangelists. Soon after the publication of this tract, there appeared in the 'Friend of India,' a periodical work under the direction of the Baptist Missionaries, an article animadverting upon it, which was signed 'a Christian Missionary,' but was written by the Rev. Mr. Schmidt. To this paper Dr. Marshman, the editor of the magazine, appended some 'Observations' of his own, in which he styled the Compiler of the 'Precepts' an 'intelligent Heathen, whose mind is as yet completely opposed to the *grand design* of the Saviour's becoming incarnate.' "

"Opposed to the grand design of the Saviour's becoming incarnate!" What could the "respected Editor," mean by this? Verily, he evinces

himself to be altogether ignorant of the "grand design" of Christianity ; while the Compiler of the "Precepts" not only proved that he understood it well, but took the most essential mode by which it could be promoted. Opposed to the grand design ! No, its greatest opponent was the "respected Editor" himself, who by the mysterious dogmas of his unscriptural creed, provoked the ridicule and bitter sarcasm of every intelligent Hindoo and Moosulman whom he tried to convert, and raised prejudices against Christianity which were not to be overcome. The Rajah understood the "grand design" of Christ, better than all the Missionaries, and did more for its service than ever their joint labours will achieve, until they alter their system, and commence the work of conversion by those very "precepts," which they hold so cheap, and of which they understand so little, but which are indeed the guide, and the only true guide to peace and happiness.

"These 'Observations,' produced a second pamphlet, entitled 'An Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the Precepts of Jesus, by a friend to truth.' The writer is now known to have been Ram Mohun Roy himself. He complains in strong terms, of the application to him of the term *Heathen* as 'a violation of truth, charity and liberality ;' (as he well might) and also controverts some of Dr. Marshman's objections to his compilation and to his reasonings in the introduction. In a subsequent number of 'The Friend of India,' Dr. Marshman inserted a brief reply to this Appeal, 'in which he still denied to the author the title of Christian, disclaiming, however, all intentions of using the term *Heathen* in an invidious sense.'

"In consequence of some farther observations of Dr. Marshman. Ram Mohun Roy published 'A Second Appeal to the Christian Public.' To this Dr. Marshman printed an elaborate answer in the 4th No. of the Quarterly Series of 'The Friend of India.' In the month of January, 1823, the author of the 'Precepts of Jesus' appeared before the public in a third and 'Final Appeal' in defence of that work, and in reply to the last answer of Dr. Marshman. Dr. Marshman's friends having collected and printed in England, his papers in this controversy, it was thought by many to be demanded by truth and justice that Ram Mohun Roy's pamphlets should be given to the British public to enable them to form an accurate judgment of the merits of both the parties in support of their respective tenets. As there appeared no prospect of the work being undertaken by any bookseller, the Unitarian Society were induced to become the publishers."

Dr. Rees observes that Dr. Marshman, in one instance, has allowed his zeal to outrun his knowledge ; and though in general, he writes like a scholar and a gentleman, has yet condescended to imitate the conduct of some low bigots on this side of the water, in designating the Unitarians, by the term of "Socinians," which he must know, is not correctly descriptive of their opinions, and is generally employed as an epithet of reproach.

You will find the preceding statement corroborated, with much additional interesting matter, in a paper which appeared recently in the Bristol Gazette, and which has been reprinted in some of our journals. To that account, give me leave to refer you, as it would be utterly incompatible with the limits, and with the object of this discourse, to enter more minutely into the history of the excellent Rajah. This must be the task of some industrious and well qualified biographer. Suffice it therefore to say, that influenced by a desire to promote his philanthropic views for the benefit of India, by his personal influence with the British

legislature, he arrived at Liverpool in the month of April, 1831—preceded by a character which excited a deep interest in the public mind, and rendered him an object of marked regard. He received numerous congratulatory addresses on his arrival in the British Metropolis—addresses, which to him must have been peculiarly gratifying, as evincing that the cause to which he was attached, and which he had laboured so zealously to promote, had numerous respectable supporters in England. He received addresses also from Ireland, particularly from Belfast, and Cork—and a Gentleman of this city, was commissioned by the *Irish Unitarian Society*, to invite him to a public entertainment. It was accordingly his intention to pay this country a visit. He seemed to take a deep interest in the affairs of Ireland, and I can state on the unquestionable authority of a friend, who was frequently in his society in London, that in the course of a month after his arrival, he had acquired such an intimate knowledge of its statistics, politics, and religion, as might almost justify the belief that he had long been directing his exclusive attention to those subjects of inquiry. He paid a visit to France, and was well received in the French court. He also intended to cross the Atlantic, and greet his Unitarian Brethren, in the land of Channing and of Ware. In London he attended the Unitarian chapel, and was twice present at the anniversary of the Unitarian Society; “but it was his system to avoid so far identifying himself with any religious body, as to make himself answerable for their acts, and opinions; and he also wished to hear preachers of other denominations, who had acquired a just celebrity. He appears to have most frequented the Church of the Rev. Dr. Kenny, (St. Saviour’s, Southwark,) who peculiarly interested him by the Christian spirit, and influence of his discourses. In Bristol he attended worship at the Unitarian Chapel, Lewin’s Mead, (of Dr. Carpenter, who wrote the able answer to Dr. Magee’s book on the atonement;) and there he had directed his son statedly to attend.” At Stapleton Grove, where his son had been passing his vacation, and where the Rajah intended to pass a few weeks, he was seized with a fever, which, notwithstanding the best medical aid that could be procured, proved fatal, and he breathed his last on Friday morning, September 27th. “His son, Rajah Ram Roy, and two Hindoo servants, with several attached friends, who had watched over him from the first day of his illness, were with him when he expired. He conversed very little during his illness, and was observed to be often engaged in prayer. He told his son, and those around him, that he should not recover.” But he was prepared for the event, and could look on death, not as the king of terrors, but as the angel of God’s kind providence, come to release him from earth, and transport him to heaven. Happily he was permitted to die in peace, commending his spirit to God, undisturbed by the cant of fanatics, and by those frightful images, which they delight to conjure up around the bed of the dying.

In reference to his interment the following notice appeared in a Bristol paper.

“INTERMENT OF THE LATE RAJAH, RAM MOHUN ROY.—The remains of this eminent individual will not be deposited in any of the usual receptacles of the

dead. It has always been an object of great importance in the view of the Rajah, to convince his countrymen that the relinquishment of idol worship, and the abolition of their superstitious and cruel rites, might be effected without deviating from the principles of their ancient faith, or incurring the loss of Brahminical caste,—thus wisely preparing the way for the introduction of Christianity among them. It has, therefore, been deemed expedient by the friends who have long been concerned in the management of his affairs, as well as by his son, that his body should not be interred in any of our usual cemeteries. There is also room to apprehend that his enemies in India might avail themselves of the fact of his being buried with Christians, or with Christian rites, to renew their unsuccessful endeavours to deprive him of *caste*, and embarrass his children in their succession to his property. Under these peculiar circumstances they have availed themselves of the permission given to deposit the honoured remains within the walls of Stapleton Grove, there to await any further decision of his family respecting them; fulfilling, by thus interring them alone, and in an appropriate spot, the desire often expressed by the Rajah—‘Where he died he would be interred, privately and in silence.’”

The Rajah was a Brahmin by birth, and he died retaining his distinction. “After his death, the thread of his caste was seen round him passing over his left shoulder, and under his right.” Wherefore, may some one ask, when he became a Christian, did he not renounce caste, and all Brahminical connexion? The reason is given in the foregoing quotation—because he was a Christian, and wished his countrymen to embrace Christianity. Had he lost caste, his influence would have been gone; and it was no more incompatible with his Christianity to retain caste, than with the apostle Paul’s, after his conversion, to conform to some parts of the Jewish ritual; and, if necessary, a greater example might be adduced in our Saviour, who, though his religion was to supersede Judaism, continued as a Jew, to “fulfil all righteousness.”

The Rajah is described as “a remarkably stout, well-formed man, nearly six feet in height, with a handsome and expressive countenance.” His manners were engaging to all, and to females in particular, were marked by a suavity, a courtesy and a refinement expressive of the benevolence of his heart—a circumstance the more striking in a native of the East, where females are not usually regarded with the same distinction as in the more cultivated nations of Europe. If in any thing his virtues, by excess, might seem verging to a fault, it was in too great a facility of concession to the opinions of those with whom he conversed, proceeding from reluctance to disturb their self-complacency. In an article on Ram Mohun, in the Asiatic Journal for Nov. 1833, it is stated that

“In the East, there are modes of conveying a civil negative by an affirmative.—He was indeed by no means deficient in the firmness requisite to deal with an adversary who defied him to the arena of argument, in which his great resources of memory and observation, his vigor and quickness of mind, his logical acuteness with no small share of wit, commonly brought him off victorious.”

His Bristol biographer says,

“That disposition to acquiescence, which eastern politeness requires, and which his own kindness of heart contributed to strengthen, was known to place him in circumstances, and lead him to expressions, which made his sincerity questioned. But, where he was best and fully known, the simplicity, candour, explicitness, and openness of his mind, were striking and acknowledged; and from these, together with his profound acquirements, his extensive information, his quick discrimination of character, his delicacy and honorable sentiments, his benevolent hopes and pur-

poses for human welfare, his benignant concern for the comfort and happiness of all around him, his affectionateness and humility of disposition, his gentleness and quick sensibility, there was a charm in his presence and conversation which made one feel love for him as well as high respect. It was impossible to be much with him in the narrow circle of private life, without entertaining attachment to him ; or without feelings approaching to reverence, for the greatness of his endowments, and the way in which he had devoted them to the welfare of his fellow-men, for the high excellencies of his character, for the purity and refinement of his sentiments, and for the earnest and elevated piety of his spirit. Those who had the best opportunities of knowing him, say that the perusal of the Scriptures was his constant practice ; and that his devotion was habitual—manifested by stated prayer, and by a frequent absorbedness of soul, the external expression of which left no room for doubt as to the direction and object of it.”

To this I can add from other sources, that his morals were characterized by spotless purity and innocence, insomuch that he has been seen, by the expression of his countenance, to manifest the deepest horror, on discovering that certain persons into whose society he was thrown, were tainted by the commission of some offences against Christian morality, which among the general mass of Christians, are regarded as venial, or involving but a very small degree of criminality.

Of the character of the excellent Rajah, intellectual, moral, religious, there seems to be only one opinion among all those whose opinion merits consideration. As for what may be thought or said of him by those, and such no doubt there are, who because he could not embrace their peculiar doctrines, would still denominate him a heathen, it is unworthy of a moment's notice. Would that but one little shred of his Christianity were shared among them, it would make them better Christians, than ever they are likely to become with their ignorant, and malevolent bigotry ! We have the testimony, not only of friends to his religious views, but of some who were opposed to them, that he was pious, and good, and learned, and wise, and patriotic, and generous, and disinterested. In fact, I cannot at this moment, recollect the name of any individual, since the days of the apostles, that has so preeminent a claim to the title of Christian. D'Acosta, the editor of a journal at Calcutta—the Abbe Gregoire “through whom he became extensively known, and highly appreciated in France”—Lieut. Col. Fitzclarence, now the Earl of Munster, who knew him well—all speak in terms of high panegyric, of his talents, his learning, his intellectual and moral endowments, his logical powers of reasoning, his philanthropy, disinterestedness, and pecuniary sacrifices in the cause of virtue and truth. The Editor of the Indian Gazette, a journal devoted to the constituted authorities, speaking of the controversy arising out of “The Precepts of Jesus,” says that “whatever other effects it may have caused, it still further exhibited the acuteness of his mind, the logical power of his intellect, and the unrivalled good temper, with which he could argue,—it roused up a most gigantic combatant in the theological field ; a combatant, who we are constrained to say, has not yet met with his match here !” Think of this being affirmed within hearing of Dr. Marshman, by the Editor of “a journal devoted to the constituted authorities !” Verily the truth is great, and it must prevail. Yes, and the antagonists of the Rajah knew this, and they dreaded this, and they acted over again, as nearly as they could, the part of the

enemies of Christianity to its first promulgators. They did not, indeed, expel him from their synagogue, but they called him reproachful names, and would have imposed silence on him, and prevented him from speaking to the world, through the press, that great organ of the world's regeneration. His first and second Appeal had been printed at the Baptist Missionary press—but when they found him proving himself to be a champion invincible and triumphant, with a mean and dastardly dread of the result, they refused him the farther use of their printing materials. But he was not thus to be baffled. With a zeal and perseverance worthy of all praise, and at considerable expense, he purchased types, employed printers, and commenced an independent printing office, for his “Final Appeal.”

The accession of such a convert as the Rajah to the truth of Christianity, should, we might suppose, be hailed with exultation by all its friends, and especially by those employed in Missionary labours, though his opinions did not altogether harmonize with theirs. But no, such is the spirit of bigotry—such the effect of entertaining narrow views of Christianity, and making it consist, not in “meat and drink” indeed, but in something still worse, in the belief of doctrines, which shock reason, and impeach the justice and mercy of the Father of all—that it would rather such converts as he, had remained still immersed in the idolatries, and abominations, from which he had escaped! That a Brahmin of such high character, so distinguished for strong intellectual powers—for superior mental cultivation—for such patient and persevering industry in the study of languages to aid him in the search after truth—that such a man should strip off the prejudices of education, should renounce the popular superstitions of his country, under the severe penalty of incurring the hostility of his relatives and friends, and at the no small risk of losing his paternal property, and most dreadful of all, of losing *caste*—which, as you well know, is to the Hindoo, a grievance more terrible than excommunication in the Roman Catholic Church—that such a man, under such circumstances, should come forward to avow his belief in Christianity at all, ought surely to be a subject of rejoicing to every one who feels a real interest in the extension of the Saviour's kingdom. By what authority, or on what grounds, did Marshman, or any of his fraternity, refuse the name of Christian to the Rajah? To what standard different from that erected by the apostles, do they presume to ask conformity? When Philip baptized the Æthiopian officer of the court of Candace, did he require a profession of belief in any such tenets, as those held by Marshman? When that officer seeing water by the way side, said, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip replied, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” This was deemed quite enough, by an inspired apostle. “He accordingly commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water—and he baptized him,” Acts viii. 36, 38. That simple confession, I repeat, was sufficient for an apostle to admit an Æthiopian to the rights and privileges of Christianity. Wherefore should the terms of admission to the same privileges, be more restricted to an Indian

Brahmin—a Brahmin too, whose knowledge of the gospel, and whose pretensions to the Christian name, it may be fairly presumed, were far superior to those of the *Æthiopian*, and infinitely beyond those of his Trinitarian opponents? But such is ever the ignorant and intolerant presumption of bigots, with their tests, and their “shibboleths,” and their assumed infallibility! They “take away the key of knowledge: they enter not in themselves, and them that were entering they hinder.” Well did the Rajah shew that they deviated widely from the example of him whom they called Master—by reminding them of Christ’s rebuke of John for a similar act of uncharitableness. “We forbid him,” said the disciple, “because he followeth not us.” “Forbid him not,” said Jesus, “for he that is not against us, is on our part.” Mark ix. 40. “The compiler of the precepts, having obviously in view, at least one object in common with the Reviewer and Editor, that of procuring respect for the precepts of Christ, might have reasonably expected more charity from professed teachers of his doctrines.” Thus thought and thus wrote the learned convert. But he had yet to learn “what spirit they were of,” and in how little estimation they held any precept in comparison of profession of faith in some of their own stupid dogmas. It is a small compliment to the Rajah to say, that he not only knew the genius and spirit of Christianity, but that he practised its duties, and rendered far more essential service to its cause, than any, or all of those whose sophistry his Scriptural arguments, in the fair field of controversy, crushed and annihilated.—In selecting and publishing the “Precepts of Jesus,” he manifested his knowledge of human nature, and particularly the nature and disposition of his own countrymen, and thus also he manifested no small degree of wisdom in preparing the way for the admission of every other part of Christianity. Yes—he acted wisely in not shocking the prejudices of his countrymen—in not proposing to them any doctrine which they were not qualified to receive, not doubting but that the most simple and intelligible points being once admitted, those which are abstruse or difficult, would in due time be admitted also. He gave them such milk, as Paul gave his infant converts, and not strong meat, which they were unable to digest. These are wise principles, which, I rejoice to say, are received and acted on by the Board of Education, in this Island—and acted on most successfully, though opposed in every variety of form, which can be assumed by misrepresentation, falsehood, and the agonized hypocrisy of a crest-fallen, disappointed, and now expiring faction. The Saviour himself acted on this principle. Mark, the evangelist, informs us, that “he spake the word unto the people, as they were able to hear it.” iv. 33. And in John xvi. 12, he says, “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” The soil must be prepared, or the seed will be scattered in vain, and the husbandman’s labour will perish. The Rajah saw the folly of proposing for the adoption of his countrymen, those tenets which have been a subject of perpetual dispute among Christians. What possible advantage could the Hindoo derive from those favourite questions of divines, the very terms of which, admit of no definite or intelligible meaning? As for Trinities, and incarnations, he had enough of them in the reli-

gion of his own country, and was not likely to favour the importation of articles with which the market was already overstocked.

“For these reasons,” says the Rajah, “I decline entering into any discussion on those points, and confine my attention, at present, to the task of laying before my fellow creatures *the words of Christ*, with a translation from the English into Sungskrit and the language of Bengal. I feel persuaded that by separating from the other matters contained in the New Testament, the moral precepts found in that book, these will be more likely to produce the desirable effect of improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding.

* * * * * Moral doctrines tending evidently to the maintenance of the peace and harmony of mankind at large, are beyond the reach of metaphysical perversion, and intelligible alike to the learned and to the unlearned. This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men’s ideas to high and liberal notions of one God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain and death, and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature, and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves, and to society, that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form.”
Introduction, pp. xxvii. xxviii.

Thus did the Indian Rajah teach the Christian Missionaries a most useful lesson, by which they must profit, unless they are incapable of learning, and steeled against conviction. He taught them that Christianity is not a crude concoction of human opinions—a compilation of creeds and articles, gathered out of the records of the dark ages—a book of conundrums, enigmas, and contradictions; but a practical rule of life, which can be felt and understood. He told them that the great barriers to the Christian religion, are the irrational and unscriptural doctrines advocated by its Missionaries; and that if they hope for success, they must change their plan, and have recourse to reason and common sense.—It is devoutly to be wished that some of our popular declaimers at home, would condescend to take a lesson from the Rajah, and if they really feel the desire which they profess to promote Christianity, sometimes expatiate on the words of Christ, and give the people a little practical instruction, in place of the vapoury rodomontade, with which they make their pulpits twang.

The learned Indian went, like the well known “Irish Gentleman,” in search of a religion; but how different was the result! The one sought it in the dark and ponderous tomes of the Fathers—in the mouldy records of general councils—in monkish legends, and the *collectanea* of Priestcraft:—the other, in the page of nature and the volume of revelation. The one depended on human authority, the other on the oracles of the living God. The one followed the “faithless phantom” of tradition—the other fixed his gaze on the “sun of righteousness.” The “Irish Gentleman” went, as he was led, hoodwinked, up the theological stream, where it ran dark and feculent, and never reached the fountain head. The Indian sprang boldly forward, in defiance of the clamours of bigotry, and drank the living waters as they flowed from the stricken rock. The former found a religion which invested the mortal head of her Church with infallibility—a man with the attributes of God—exact ed blind submission to ecclesiastical authority, with prostration of the un-

derstanding, with distrust of the evidence of the senses; and taught Transubstantiation, the Trinity, and the worship of Mary the mother of God! The latter found a religion which takes her stand, not on the decrees of councils which are often contradictory, on the opinions of men which are always fluctuating, on the records of tradition which are always uncertain, but on the word of God, which is the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" on those positive announcements of holy writ, which no artifice can disguise, nor any sophistry explain away:—a religion which he recognized as the offspring of heaven, which taught him, as we have seen, that God is one, that God is love—that man is accountable, that to obey God and keep his commandments is the duty, the happiness, the chief end of man; a religion which enlightens the mind and purifies the heart, elevates the thoughts from earth to heaven, and while it stimulates to run the high career of virtue, opens to the enraptured gaze bright visions of bliss and glory; blooming as Paradise, durable as eternity.

Such was the learned Indian's high veneration for the sacred Scriptures, that he refused to receive any doctrine, as a doctrine of religion, which they have not revealed. He gave the decrees of Councils and Fathers to the winds, and taking the word of God as his only true guide and instructor, asserted with it, the divine unity, in opposition to all Tritheism and Polytheism.

"It is my reverence for Christianity" says he, in his Second Appeal (p. 304) "and for the author of this religion, that has induced me to endeavour to vindicate it from the charge of Polytheism, as far as my limited capacity and knowledge extend. It is indeed mortifying to my feelings, to find a religion that from its sublime doctrines and pure morality should be respected above all other systems, reduced almost to a level with Hindoo theology, merely by human creeds and prejudices; and from this cause brought to a comparison with the Paganism of ancient Greece, which while it included a plurality of Gods, yet maintained that *Θεός ἐστὶ ἓως* or 'God is one,' and that their numerous divine *persons* were all comprehended in that one Deity."

"Having derived my own opinions on this subject entirely from the Scriptures themselves, I may perhaps be excused for the confidence with which I maintain them against those of so great a majority, who appeal to the same authority for theirs; inasmuch as I attribute the different views, not to any inferiority of judgment compared with my own limited ability, but to the powerful effect of early religious impressions; for when these are deep, reason is seldom allowed its natural scope in examining them to the bottom. Were it a practice among Christians to study first the books of the Old Testament as found arranged in order, and to acquire a knowledge of the true force of scriptural phrases and expressions, without attending to interpretations given by any sect; and then to study the New Testament, comparing the one with the other, Christianity would not any longer be liable to be encroached on by human opinions." (304, 305)

Again he observes in his Final Appeal, "The doctrine of the Trinity appears to me so obviously unscriptural, that I am pretty sure, from my own experience and that of others, that no one possessed of merely common sense, will fail to find its unscripturality, after a methodical study of the Old and New Testaments, unless previously impressed in the early part of his life with creeds and forms of speech preparing the way to that doctrine."

The Rajah attributes that prevalence of belief in the Trinity, which exists in Christendom, to the same causes as those which perpetuate and establish Hindooism in the East,—the force of early impressions.

“The minds of youths, and even infants, being once thoroughly impressed with the name of the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, long before they can think for themselves, must be always inclined, even after their reason has become matured, to interpret the sacred books, even those texts which are evidently inconsistent with this doctrine, in a manner favourable to their prepossessed opinion, whether their study be continued for three, or thirty, or twice thirty years. Could Hindooism continue after the present generation, or bear the studious examination of a single year, if the belief of their idols being endued with animation, were not carefully impressed on the young before they come to years of understanding?” (355.)

Having in another place noticed some facts in Mosheim, and shewn how some nominal converts to Christianity, came to pass a decree, constituting Christ one of the persons of the Godhead, he says,

“These facts coincide entirely with my own firm persuasion of the impossibility, that a doctrine so inconsistent with the evidence of the senses as that of three persons in one being, should ever gain the sincere assent of any one, into whose mind it has not been instilled in early education. Early impressions alone can induce a Christian to believe that three are one and one is three; just as by the same means a Hindoo is made to believe that millions are one, and one is millions; and to imagine that an inanimate idol is a living substance, and capable of assuming various forms. As I have sought to attain the truths of Christianity from the words of the author of this religion, and from the undisputed instructions of his holy apostles, and not from a parent or tutor, I cannot help refusing my assent to any doctrine which I do not find scriptural.”

Noble, magnanimous declaration! Would that those who pride themselves on their exclusive right to the name of Christian, were to profit by this example!

Well did the Rajah understand from his own observation and experience, the strongly marked and almost indelible colour of first impressions.

“The vessel, well
With liquor seasoned, long retains the smell.”*

He knew, as Wordsworth expresses it, that “The child is father to the man,” or, as Dryden amplifies the thought—

* The “Irish Gentleman” has beautifully expressed the sentiment of the Latin poet, thus

*You may break, you may ruin the vase as you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.*

And not the scent of roses only, as the “Irish Gentleman’s” own experience can attest, but the scent of whatever it is first imbued withal—*quo recens est imbuta*—the putrescence of idolatry, as well as the fragrance of the incense which ascends to heaven.—Even religious truth, when admitted into minds which have been early and deeply impregnated with superstition, seems to lose its freshness, and imbibe the smell of the casket in which it is lodged.

Sincerum nisi est vas quodcunque infundis acescit.—HOR.

The Epicurean poet understood this—

*Intellexit, ibi vitium vas efficere ipsum
Omniaque illius vitio corrumpier intus.*—LUCR. VI. 16, 17.

“By education most have been misled ;
 So they believe because they were so bred ;
 The Priest continues what the Nurse began,
 And thus the child imposes on the man.”

But early impressions are not the only source of an erroneous belief. A “golden image” erected by royal hands, and surrounded with “all kinds of music,” will never lack worshippers. There are other Goddesses beside the great Diana, who have their Demetrius to excite an uproar against the friends of genuine Christianity. Wherever there are fashion and popularity, and the smiles of the fair, with their silver shrines, and academical honours, and Church preferments, and places of dignity and emolument ; all inviting to the adoption and profession of error ; error will assuredly be adopted and professed. Naked truth, though beautiful and captivating to the heart and mind of those who dare to love her for herself alone, will have small chance of being chosen by the selfish and dastardly time-serving idolater of the world, in preference to falsehood, in all her distortion and monstrosity, if clad in ermine and brocade, and rolled in a coach and six. But were truth and error to come fairly into the arena with no extraneous appendages, we should see the former claiming the victory amidst universal acclamations, without even the appearance of a skirmish. This, however, would be a small triumph. She must and she will, one day, prevail over all prejudice, prepossession, worldly interest, intolerance, bigotry, superstition, and idolatry. For Christ “must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ;” “that God may be all in all.”

Having, during the progress of this discourse, been under the painful necessity of animadverting on the illiberality of some of the Rajah’s opponents, it is with no small satisfaction that I turn to the agreeable task of shewing, that his character and views were highly appreciated, not only by that denomination of Christians, who claim him as their own, but by liberal and enlightened members of other denominations. A striking instance of this occurs in the dedication to him of a Sermon, entitled, “Charity, the greatest of the Christian graces,” by the Rev. Richard Warner, Rector of Great Chalfield, Wilts. (1832.) The Letter dedicatory runs thus,—

“Rajah !

“Allow me to introduce the following Sermon to the notice of the Public, under the auspices of your ‘respected and respectable name.’

“The epithets are appropriate : not so much on account of the condition, fortune, or talent, (distinguished as they may be) of the person to whom they are applied ; as for the deep interest which he takes in the happiness of his fellow creatures ; and for the labours in which he exercises himself, for the diffusion of the LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY, and the promotion of EVANGELICAL LOVE, among an hundred millions of his countrymen ; immersed in spiritual darkness, or drunken with intolerant superstition !

“Rajah ! never shall I forget the long and profoundly interesting conversation, which passed between us a few days ago, on subjects the most important to the comfort and peace of mankind here, and their felicity hereafter—nor will the noble declaration fade from my recollection—that—‘you were not only ready to sacrifice

station, property, and even life itself, to the advancement of a religion, which (in its genuine purity and simplicity) proved its descent from the GOD OF LOVE, by its direct tendency to render mankind happy, in both a present and a future world—but that you should consider the abstaining from such a course, as the non-performance of one of the HIGHEST DUTIES, imposed upon rational, social, and accountable man !

“Rajah ! ‘a door’ of the most extensive usefulness is ‘opened’ to you by DIVINE PROVIDENCE, *macte virtute esto*. Go on as you have begun ! and may God prosper your benevolent endeavours to spread through the fairest, but most benighted portion of the earth’s surface, the KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST and the PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY !

“I am, Rajah,

“Your friend and brother in Christ,

“RICHARD WARNER.”

This, I doubt not, you will affirm to be a truly Christian letter, as worthy of its writer as of him to whom it is addressed. Such sentiments, from a Rector of the Church of England, is a sign of the approach of favourable times, of “times of restitution” to the knowledge and the worship of the only living and true God. On the sure word of prophecy we found our belief, that the time is approaching when “all nations whom Jehovah hath made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things ; thou art God alone.” “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” We may wish to see that day at hand, and we should do all in our power to expedite its approach. But let us remember that great mental changes are seldom instantaneous. Religious as well as political revolutions are the work of time ; and though, in this country, many strenuous efforts have been made to impede the progress of improvement, and though the spirit of Antichrist has wrought with great industry, and not without some success, among the little Popes and Cardinals of the Synod of Ulster, there are still some minds in that reverend assembly, which are ashamed of their degradation, and impatient of the muzzle and the yoke which were strapped upon them during a reign of terror. Let us hope and pray that they will assume courage, to come out of the house of bondage, and vindicate their rights as Christian men. Every where else the human mind is advancing :—will they alone continue retrograde ? Every where else the principles of religious liberty, of which “the Reformers” had very imperfect notions, are now beginning to be well understood. It is not yet three centuries since Servetus was burned for holding Arian tenets. This day is exactly the 280th anniversary, since that atrocity was perpetrated by the “reformer,” as he is called, of Geneva—but of whom the *arch deformer* of Christianity, would be a more appropriate title. How much has knowledge advanced since that time ; and how much has the power of persecution been curtailed ? Instead of kindling Smithfield fires, she can only threaten another fire, over which she has, happily, still less controul ; and she must now be contented with such weapons as calumny and vituperation, instead of *thumb-screws, boots, fair maidens,*

and other instruments of torture. It was only yesterday, I might almost say, since a statute was repealed, that might have punished by fine and imprisonment, the expression of those great evangelical truths, which you have this day heard advocated—that inflicted on the man who stood in the very pulpit from which you are now addressed, on the learned and virtuous Emlyn,—a sentence which lies a dark and heavy blot, on the religious history of this land. How would it rejoice his spirit to hear that those great truths for which “he suffered hardships, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” are now boldly avowed by thousands of the most virtuous and intelligent of our species? Theologians, from attachment to early hereditary notions, and various other causes, may labour as much as they please, to bolster up the doctrine of a Triune God, and an Incarnate God—but all their efforts will prove unavailing. Nature, reason, philosophy, scripture, all protest against the monstrous corruption—and though it may obtain credence in the same way as a belief in Transubstantiation, it is equally unfounded and must come to an end. Whereas belief in the simple unity of the Most High, is by the indomitable power of truth, forcing itself daily on the minds of many whose early prejudices were all opposed to its reception. Before this belief all false systems of divinity, whether of Rome, of Geneva, or of England, must fall prostrate, as Dagon before the ark of Jehovah, and leave not a stump behind. The illustrious Rajah is among the first and choicest fruits of Indian conversion—and his conversion is remarkable in this, that it was effected, in opposition to difficulties and discouragements, which to any mind of ordinary stamp, must have proved insuperable, solely by his superior knowledge of Scripture, combined with an invincible love of truth. It is well known that Mr. William Adam, a Baptist Missionary of Serampore, who endeavoured to make him a convert to orthodoxy, concluded his task by acknowledging himself a convert to the true evangelical opinions of the Rajah! By him has the great, the everlasting truth, “JEHOVAH OUR GOD IS ONE,” been proclaimed to the nations of the East.—It has been attested to those of the West by his appearance among them, by his character, by his writings. May his great and good example be followed by thousands and millions of his countrymen—and may we lend our strenuous efforts to promote a cause, which has for its objects the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the felicity of man. Amen.

FINIS.

P D 1.20.

1 Dec 1 2.



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Jan. 2005

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



DOBBS BROS.
LIBRARY BINDING

FEB - 69

ST. AUGUSTINE

FLA.

32084



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 689 349 A